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ABSTRACT

This document reports on the second year of operation of Project ARJO: Academic Recovery through Job Opportunity, a program developed by Sandy Union High School District #2 in Sandy, Oregon under a Title VI Excellence in Education grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The primary objective of Project ARJO is the academic recovery of potential and actual high school dropouts between the ages of 15 and 21 through employment/education linkages. The project's multi-agency approach to achieving this objective is explained, the population of academically disadvantaged and at-risk students targeted by the project is described, and three educational alternatives offered to participants are discussed. This report notes that the Job Club/Shared Praxis philosophy and behavior modification techniques initiated in Project ARJO's first year of operation continued to form the basis of the operation during the second year, and that the linkages with the Career Development Center at Sandy Union High School were retained. Local budget problems andf funding concerns are discussed, employment statistics and educational outcomes for the program participants are given, and results of a client follow-up survey are presented. It is concluded that Project ARJO has been effective in retaining at-risk youth in the educational system. Relevant newspaper articles about the project are appended. (NB)

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REPORT ON SECOND YEAR OF OPERATION OF PROJECT ARJO - "ACADEMIC RECOVERY THROUGH JOB OPPORTUNITY"

Sandy Union High School District #2
17100 Bluff Road
Sandy, Oregon 97055

Funded through Title VI:
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Report prepared by:
Gary Knepper
Project ARJO

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Background

This is the report for the second year of operation of Project ARJO: "Academic Recovery through Job Opportunity." Sandy Union High School District #2 in Sandy, Oregon, established the project under a Title VI: Excellence in Education grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The primary objective of Project ARJO, as proposed in the grant, is to academically recover potential and actual high school dropouts, ages fifteen to twenty-one years, through employment/education linkages.

Project ARJO has been designed to accomplish the objective through a multi-agency approach including: (1) the development of an off-campus employability skills/job search office; (2) social service agencies; and (3) the utilization of the resources of Sandy Union High School, particularly the Career Development Center.

Youth targeted for the program are academically disadvantaged or at-risk. Such individuals generally fall into one or more of the following categories: (a) perform below grade level in reading, writing, or mathematics; (b) have been unable or unwilling to adapt to the traditional classroom environment; (c) lack motivation to learn; or (d) have experienced attendance problems.

In terms of employment, the youth (e) have not developed marketable vocational skills and (f) will encounter difficulty in locating and keeping a job without special assistance. However, any youth who is interested in the program can enroll since this encourages widespread participation by the community and prevents stereotyping of clients.

In the establishment of a support system for the individual through a client-centered vocational counselor at the off-campus office, related support services, and actual employment experience, Project ARJO seeks to retain or return the client to an educational environment. Through the Project, there are three educational alternatives offered. The first is re-enrollment in a regular high school program at Sandy High School or elsewhere.

Another option is enrollment in a high school completion program leading to General Equivalency Degree (G.E.D.) through the local community college. The G.E.D. classes can be taken on the college campus located twelve miles away in Gresham or at Sandy High School. A third option is enrollment in a modified high school completion program such as that available throught the Tri-City Alternative School located about twenty miles away in Oregon City.

The Sandy Union High School District encompasses an area of over 700 square miles in Clackamas County, Oregon. According to recent estimates, the town of Sandy has a population of approximately 3,500 within its incorporated limits. The area served by the high school is mostly rural and mountainous, consisting of small owner-operated farms and businesses. Some students live in isolated locations nearly forty miles from the high school, which provides bus transportation. Timber production is the only large-scale industry, but independent owner-operated logging enterprises also predominate in this business.

Sandy Union High School enrolls over 1200 students in grades nine through twelve from five separate elementary districts, each of which has its own administration and school board. A staff of seventy teachers at the high school provides a diversity of courses for a comprehensive educational program, including ten approved vocational clusters. Statistics for the graduating class of 1986 show that 34% of the incoming freshman in 1982 did not graduate with their class, nor did they request to have their academic records sent to another educational institution. Such a transcript request is necessary to effectuate a transfer to another school.

A significant feature of the Project ARJO design has been the development of an off-campus center where intensive Job Search and Employability Skills Workshops could be offered to youth. The center (called the Job Club) was located in an office in downtown Sandy so that it would be accessible to anyone who was interested. Such a location had been intentionally chosen to overcome the alienation or suspicion which many dropouts and at-risk youths might feel toward a program housed at Sandy High School. Another advantage was that the office could be open after school hours so that more individuals would be able to attend.

Same Method of Operation

The Job Club/Shared Praxis philosophy and behavior modification techniques continued to form the basis of the operation of Project ARJO during the second year. A detailed explanation of the treatment process was included in the Final Report on the first year of the Project. In addition, the linkages with the Career Development Center at Sandy Union High School were retained.

Due to the high incidence of economic insecurity in the area, the Project staff again dealt with a range of social problems. Clients were helped to obtain Food Stamps, emergency housing, public services, and Social Security payments, for example. The Job Club/Project ARJO offered both direct

assistance/advocacy and referral as warranted by the needs of particular clients.

The only major change in the operation of Project ARJO was the departure of Gary Knepper in late June, 1988. He took a position with a social service agency in Portland. However, he was very capably replaced by the part-time assistants who had worked with him. Both Debbie Ricketts and Darlene Lewis were thoroughly familiar with the philosophy, operations, and clients of the Job Club/Project ARJO. In addition, Mr. Knepper provided advice and help whenever needed or requested, thus continuity in the program was assured.

Local Budget Problems and Continued Funding

Extensive efforts were made during the second year to continue the Job Club after expiration of the Project ARJO grant in September, 1988. The Advisory Board developed proposals and plans for future funding. As originally planned, the Board had hoped to raise about eight thousand to ten thousand dollars locally and about twenty-five thousand dollars from other sources. The cost for the program would have been higher for the third year since Gary Knepper had been a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) placement during most of his tenure with Project ARJO.

Future funding was complicated by the extreme budget constraints of both the City of Sandy and the Sandy Union High School District. The City was at its legal budget limit and was attempting to scrape together limited funds just to perform urgent street repairs. In fact, the city had tried to cut financing to the Senior Center until a public outcry forced it to restore the funding.

Sandy High School also had severe budget problems. The district had not been able to secure voter approval of an "operating levy" to cover current educational costs. Until 1987, such districts would have been forced to close until voters approved an often scaled-down levy. In that year, though, the Oregon Legislature enacted the so-called "Safety Net Law." The act stipulated that school districts could remain open after they had made several successive attempts to gain voter approval of a levy.

However, the school district had to rely on the last approved levy for its funding and no new monies could be raised. In the case of Sandy High School, the district could spend no more than the amount approved in 1986. Thus, the 1988-1989 and 1989-1990 budgets had to rely on the same level of funding as that of several years earlier. Consequently, the

effects of the budget freeze will become progressively more extreme and debilitating. The problem had been exacerbated by an expensive contract settlement after a threatened teachers strike last spring.

The district could ask for a new levy from the voters, but residents of the area regularly disapprove of such measures and the higher property taxes involved. Some relief might come from the Oregon legislature next year which has school finance reform as one of its priorities. Until that time, however, Sandy High School and the other districts governed by the Safety Net Law will be faced with continuing operations in the face of unchanged revenues. Approximately one quarter of Oregon districts have been affected so far, many of which have been forced to make drastic cutbacks and personnel layoffs.

Other Sources of Funding Considered

Because of the preceding financial problems, only three thousand to five thousand dollars were expected to be available locally. Thus, Gary Knepper and the Advisory Board sought assistance from a wide variety of sources. For example, Gary Knepper applied for monies from the Clackamas County Social Services Department, the Clackamas County Juvenile Services Commission, and the Clackamas County Educational Services Department.

Ordinarily Employment, Training, and Business Services - the county's Job Training Partnership Act agency - would have been more than willing to help. Unfortunately, it was about to suffer a funding cut of nearly one million dollars for the next year. Most of the agencies in the county were facing similar problems. The continued federal cutbacks in social programs, combined with a very restrictive state budget, make no money available from county sources.

Mr. Knepper and the Advisory Board also requested funding from other sources. For example, assistance was sought from the State of Oregon Community Services Office, the Governor's Student Retention Initiative, and the State of Oregon Department of Education. Funding was also sought from United Way of the Columbia-Willamette (Metropolitan Portland). Unfortunately, monies were not available from such bodies.

Debbie Ricketts and Darlene Lewis also actively pursued corporate grants. A diverse group of corporations and foundations were approached. Written applications were made to the Fred Meyer Charitable Trust, the Safeway Corporation, Omark Industries, Mentor Graphics, the Nike Corporation, Payless Corporation, Nordstrom Corporation, and many others. Due to the unmet needs of social service and other nonprofit

organizations in Oregon, competition for such grants was fierce. Thus, no funding was secured from such sources.

Both women conducted local fundraising efforts to continue the Job Club. Service clubs were targeted for contributions. Ms. Ricketts and Ms. Lewis donated vast amounts of their time and materials to hold a raffle, garage sale, and smaller events. The activities were extremely well-organized and well-run. In addition, the Sandy Post newspaper strongly supported the Job Club on both the front page and in the editorial section (See Attachments #1 and #2). Unfortunately, the amount of money raised fell far short of the amount needed to continue the program. Thus, the Job Club closed on September 30, 1988. (See Attachment #3).

Incorporation Into High School Curriculum

Even though the Job Club closed, Sandy High School was able to incorporate elements of it into the curriculum to address the dropout problem. During the current school year, a Prescription Learning Laboratory has been established to aid "at-risk" youth. Students who are at-risk of failure in reading or math are identified through achievement test scores, previous academic records, teacher evaluations, and counselor recommendations.

Prescription learning emphasizes diagnosis, prescription and remediation. Step one is the administration of a pre-test to determine the placement level of the student. The second step is the development of a prescription or plan according to the skill deficiencies of the individual. In step three, the student works on an individual learning program which is self-paced. Some of the study takes place on a personal computer.

Immediate feedback is obtained as the work is completed and corrected. A series of practice tests are used to continuously evaluate the progress of the student. In the last step, a final post-test is administered to determine the achievement level of the student. The sessions in the Prescription Learning Lab are held as regularly scheduled classes during the day. An individual usually attends one session each day, but two will be required next semester. About one hundred and twenty students will be served by the program this year.

Another new effort of the high school is entitled "Survival Skills". Youth with social and behavioral problems who are at-risk of delinquency and dropping out are targeted for the program. Specific skill development areas are included. Examples are listening and note-taking skills, study habits,

library skills, test preparation, and money management. Others involve how to find employment, how to complete an application, and interview practice. Time is also devoted to counseling, improving interpersonal relationships, and discussing issues of self-worth. About twenty individuals are enrolled in this program.

The high school has also developed a daytime General Equivalency Degree (G.E.D.) program. Students focus on the competency areas of Science, Literature and Arts, Mathematics, Writing Skills, and Social Studies. In addition to preparing for the G.E.D. exam, the teacher and students also discuss such issues as future career plans, the job market, how to find employment, and self-esteem.

Through the three programs mentioned above, the high school intends to recover many of the marginal and at-risk students. Although the effort is too new for much concrete data, the district hopes to bring the dropout rate down to approximately twenty percent for the four year cycle of a particular class. Much of the Job Club/Shared Praxis approach of Project ARJO has been incorporated into the new effort. Funding has been provided by various forms of dedicated and state monies.

Employment Statistics

Project ARJO has consistently met or exceeded the quarterly goals established for the program. Under the guidelines for the second year, 350 clients were to be served from October 1, 1987 through September 30, 1988. By the end of September, 1988, 367 had actually been helped. A goal of 200 job placements had been mandated. Actual outcomes show that 306 clients were successful in obtaining employment. In addition, the follow-up survey (described below) found that 98 clients secured one or more additional positions.

Thus, a total of 404 jobs were obtained by individuals ages fifteen through twenty-four from October 1, 1987, through September 30, 1988. Individuals through the age of twenty-four were included because they faced many of the same problems and marginal economic conditions evidenced by younger clients served by the Job Club/Project ARJO. See Table 1 on the next page for a summary of employment statistics. (The table did not report casual labor jobs lasting only a day. There were 97 of these.)

Not included in the employment statistics were 82 clients from the previous year who returned to the Job Club looking for an additional or replacement job. The Job Club assisted these individuals whenever they needed help. These persons often brought in their friends with them to receive services.

The returning clients secured an additional 74 jobs through their renewed efforts.

Due to economic conditions and social service needs in the area, the Job Club also aided adults. Many of these individuals were referred by other social service organizations, especially the Sandy Community Action Center. Thus, 77 adults (over the age of 24) were served during the second year of Project ARJO, and 71 of them secured jobs.

Table 1: CLIENTS PLACED - PROJECT ARJO
(Includes clients with more than one job)
(October 1, 1987 - September 30, 1988)

Office Work	12	Installers	1
Clerks	27	Service Station Attendants	17
Fast Food	66	General Labor/ Landscape	42
Restaurant	43	Park Workers	9
Baker	7	Highway	7
Childcare	16	Agriculture	51
Housekeeping	7	Production	26
Janitorial	9	Health Aide	17
Health Club Attendant	4	Driver	0
Automobile	13	Military	2
Maintenance/ Painting	17	Animal Work	1
Construction	9	Job Corps	1
		Subtotal	404
		+ Jobs for adults over age 24	+ 71
		Total	475

Job classifications are explained on next page.

Table 1A: JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

OFFICE WORK: Secretaries, receptionists, office aides, dispatchers, etc.

CLERK: Sales clerks in retail stores, courtesy/carryout clerks in grocery stores, inventory clerks, cashiers, etc.

FAST FOOD: All positions at establishments such as McDonald's, Burger King, etc. Also delicatessen helpers.

RESTAURANT: Full-service operations with positions as dishwashers, buspersons, hosts/hostesses, waiters/waitresses, food preparers, etc.

BAKER: Doughrollers, bakers, bagel production, etc.

CHILDCARE: Long-term or live-in child care only.

HOUSEKEEPING: Hotel/Motel maids, housecleaning services, etc.

JANITORIAL: Cleaning offices, shops, commercial buildings, etc.

HEALTH CLUB ATTENDANT: Self-explanatory.

AUTOMOBILE: Automobile detailing and body work, mechanical service and repair.

MAINTENANCE/PAINTING: Maintenance, repair of equipment, house painting, interior painting, etc.

CONSTRUCTION: Carpentry, remodeling, repair, drywall, etc.

INSTALLERS: Installation of carpet, pools, etc.

Table 1A: JOB CLASSIFICATIONS (CONTINUED)

SERVICE STATION ATTENDANT: Self-explanatory.

GENERAL LABOR/LANDSCAPE: Landscaping, laying barkdust, weeding, planting, gardening for property owners, lawn care, woodcutting, etc.

PARK WORKER: General labor for U.S. Forest Service, Youth Conservation Corps, county and city parks, etc.

HIGHWAY: Roadside litter patrol.

AGRICULTURE: Nursery work, planting, fertilizing, potting, transplanting, etc. Building fire trails, commercial reforestation, slash burning, Christmas tree harvesting, etc.

PRODUCTION: Assembly line work, such as factories and canneries. Also mechanical crop harvesting, production machines, logging, welding, sawmill workers, etc.

HEALTH AIDE: Health-related occupations, such as nurse's aide, mental health aide, treatment aide, etc.

DRIVER: Merchandise delivery, truck drivers, etc.

MILITARY: Self-explanatory.

ANIMAL WORK: Kennel assistant, veterinarian assistant, trainer of horses, stable hand, racetrack dog handler.

JOB CORPS: Federal training and employment program.

The vast majority of jobs listed in Table 1 have starting wages of $3.35 to $3.50 per hour. A few of the categories such as "Construction" and "Maintenance/Painting," for example, start in the $4.00 to $5.00 per hour range. Generally, wage scales in the area are very low. Jobs in the categories of "General Labor/Landscape," "Park Workers," "Highway," and "Agriculture," are seasonal. Most of the other positions are permanent with the exception of some agriculture-related production jobs. The average length of time a Project ARJO client spends in a particular job is three to six months.

Survey

After completion of the second year of Project ARJO, a follow-up survey was conducted of these clients. The goal was to contact each person in order to ascertain current educational and employment status. Most of the information was gathered by telephone. For individuals without telephone service, messages were left with friends for the former clients to contact the Job Club.

In the survey, each person was provided with the following information:

"This is the Job Club. We are calling everybody who came through the program in the last year. This follow-up is required by our grant. All your answers are confidential. No one else will know how you answered."

Then the following questions were asked:

1. "Do you presently have a job?"

2. If the answer was "yes", then "Where are you working? What do you do there?"

3. "What other jobs have you held since you came to the Job Club?"

4. "Are you attending school?"

5. If the answer was "no", or the client was a dropout, he/she was then asked, "Are you enrolled in a G.E.D. or other program to finish high school?"

6. Dropouts were reminded about G.E.D. and alternative programs available.

Educational Outcomes

Of the 367 clients assisted by Project ARJO during the sec-year of the program, 241 were in-school youths. 132 males and 109 females comprised this group. Table 2 provided the information on educational outcomes. Grade reports were available for 119 of the males and 103 of the females. (The others attended other schools.)

At-risk students were identified primarily by Grade Point Average (G.P.A.). Students with G.P.A.'s below 2.0 on a four-point scale received a high percentage of F's which was impeding their academic progress. These at-risk students who had a G.P.A. below 2.0 were, on average, at least a quarter of an academic year behind their peers in academic credits. Thus, the G.P.A.'s and credits accumulated were more accurately predictive of possible drop-outs than were the numbers of absences. Thus, 37 of the females and 56 of the males were at-risk. The cumulative G.P.A. for the at-risk females was 1.4 while that of the at-risk males was 1.2. In contrast, the females and males who were not at-risk had overall G.P.A.'s of 2.6 and 2.3 respectively. (The school-wide G.P.A. was 2.3).

In statistics for the current year, the percentages of at-risk students served by the Job Club/Project ARJO was down from the previous year. Also the G.P.A.'s were slightly higher. This was probably an early indication of the effect of the initiatives taken by Sandy High School to deal with the drop out problem. (Such efforts were described earlier in the report.)

To attempt to determine the effect of the treatment from Project ARJO on academic performance, the grades of participants were examined for the semester just before and just after Job Club attendance. After a comparative review of the grade reports, a chang of .4 letter grade for the semester following treatment seemed to be significant. (Smaller changes could have been due to other factors.)

Using the preceding standard, 38 of the 56 at-risk males improved their semester-to-semester G.P.A.'s by .4 or more while 3 declined by at least that amount. 17 males kept their grade changes within the margin. For the 37 at-risk females, 23 increased their semester-to-semester G.P.A. by .4 or more while 2 declined by at least that amount. 11 females kept their grade changes within the margin of the 93 at-risk students, only 4 dropped out during the year, a much lower rate than the Sandy High School average of over eight percent per year.

Table 2: Educational Outcomes

	Male	Female	Subtotal
In-school students when originally served by Project ARJO	132	109	241
Graduated - from previous line	29	34	63
Number of graduates attending post-secondary education/training	8	11	19
Students continuing in school after ARJO	95	70	165
Dropped out after ARJO	8	5	13
Later returned to high school or G.E.D. after em-ployment-from previous line	4	3	7
High school graduates served by Project ARJO	19	23	42
Number of graduates attending post-secondary education/training after ARJO - from previous line	2	3	5
Dropouts served by Project ARJO	41	27	68
Dropouts who returned to high school after ARJO - from previous line	3	1	4
Dropouts who enrolled in G.E.D. after Project ARJO	22	17	39
Dropouts who completed G.E.D. - from previous line	8	5	13
Clients ages 22-24 served by ARJO	7	9	16
Totals	199	168	367

Conclusion

As indicated on Table 2, Project ARJO has been effective in retaining at-risk youth in the educational system. Only 13 of 241 in-school youth dropped out after the Job Club/Project ARJO treatment process. This is a rate of approximately 5.4% per year which is below the 8.5% dropout rate per year for Sandy High School before the start of the program. Even though Project ARJO has ended, the initiatives which the High School has developed should further lower the dropout rate. (These were the Prescription Learning Laboratory, Survival Skills classes, and the in-school G.E.D. program.).

The Job Club

Successful program may lack financing to continue

The Sandy Job Club has helped 700 people find employment, but the federally funded program may come to a close this fall.

The job club was founded two years ago when a grant, written by Sandy High School Principal Dennis Crow, was approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

The director, Gary Knepper, has been praised by people involved with the program, but he is considering other employment opportunities when the funding period comes to a close.

> The job club has been effective in finding employment for people who have either failed the system or been failed by the system.
>
> — Mark Mullins

However, a replacement has been found if the necessary financing can be arranged from local sources.

Darlene Lewis, a part-time secretary at the job club, would succeed Knepper. Lewis said she believes in what the program is trying to accomplish and that it needs to be continued.

Crow, who is on the club's board of directors, said it was Knepper's work that kept the experimental program solvent for a second year. The Sandy program was one of only three out of 121 applicants that was financed for a second year.

City Manager Tom Reber told the City Council on June 6 that he might ask the council for a $3,000 to $5,000 commitment to keep the program going. The Sandy High School board also has heard a presentation on the job club, but has not made a commitment for funding.

With local commitments, Lewis said grants and fund-raisers would round out the total needed to keep the program going.

The job club operates on a $22,000 annual budget. Of that amount, $15,000 goes toward salaries for the director and two part-time secretaries. During his first year with the club, Knepper worked as a Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA).

But the job club board has reduced the total needed to about $15,000 or $16,000 by reducing the amount of money paid for salaries, rent and for telephone services.

According to Mark Mullins, a chiropractic physician and member of the board, the proposed budget is "tremendously lean."

Mullins said the job club has been effective in finding employment for people who have either failed the system or been failed by the system.

Mullins said the job club often makes the difference between someone living off welfare or earning a living at a subsistence level.

From July 1986, when Knepper first started running the program, to Sept. 30, 1987, the job club served 374 young people and 57 adults over the age of 24.

Since September 1987, the job club has found 281 jobs for young people and another 29 jobs for adults.

The Sandy Job Club's most important function is its job search and employment skills development sessions, where they help clients find jobs in the "hidden job market" and teach job interviewing skills.

Lewis, left, and Gary Knepper would like to see the Sandy Job Club continue to help people find employment.

Knepper said 80 percent of the job openings are never advertised, and so personal contacts are valuable in finding work.

Lewis helps in that way by contactings employers to see if they have openings. Job seekers get discouraged if they keep going to places that aren't hiring, she said.

On a chalk board behind Lewis's desk is a list of about 15 job openings. They range from foundry work to car lot attendant and waitressing.

The job club is set up to help people who are "academically at risk." These are people who have experienced attendance problems in school, have no job skills or have other problems.

One goal is to get these people back in school, either through a regular high school program, a general equivalency program or an alternative school.

The job club also is a member of the Clackamas County Information and Referral Network and helps people find their way through the maze of social service agencies.

Knepper said people who don't have a job often have other problems, such as transportation or health care needs.

In addition to serving students at risk, some high school graduates take advantage of the job club's contacts as well.

Older adults also use the service. Knepper said it is not unusual for people to get food and clothing from the Sandy Community Action Center and then go to the job club for help in finding employment.

The job club is at 39120 Highway 26, which is upstairs in the Frontier Building. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Its location off the Sandy High School campus makes it less threatening to school dropouts.

Attachment #2 - Sandy Post, June 23, 1988, p.2

The Sandy Post

Editorial

Sandy Job Club is worth saving

An experimental program that has been successful in helping people find jobs is in danger of extinction.

And it would be a shame if that were allowed to happen. The Sandy Job Club is worth saving.

The job club was started two years ago when a grant, written by Sandy High School Principal Dennis Crow, was approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

Job club Director Gary Knepper was immediately successful. The program was one of only three nationwide, out of 121 applicants, that was financed for a second year.

Since July 1986, when Knepper took over the program, the job club has found jobs for over 700 people. Many of them have been high school dropouts, a group that has become the focus of attention in discussions about crime and school funding in recent years.

But the job club has also helped high school graduates and adults find jobs.

For adults, it is not unusual for the people to go to the Sandy Community Action Center for food and clothing and then to the job club for help in finding employment, Knepper said.

As a member of the Clackamas County Information and Referral Network, it has helped people find their way through the maze of social service agencies.

Three job club board members have praised Knepper for his efforts. Knepper is considering other employment in the fall, but Darlene Lewis, who now works part time as a secretary, is considered an able replacement.

And she is anxious to continue the program because she believes in what it is accomplishing.

This is not a situation where bureaucrats are fighting to save their jobs. The job club operates on a budget that nearly anyone would consider lean and prudent.

But the federal financing is being withdrawn. None of the experimental job programs is being financed for a third year.

And so it is now up to local individuals, businesses and governments to keep it going.

We feel the Sandy City Council and the Sandy High School board of directors should provide the program with some financial backing. A grant from the Clackamas County Juvenile Services Commission is reportedly a possibility in the fall.

And an account has been set up for donations at the Clackamas County Bank. Suburban Ford has donated $100 to the program.

It is important that local people work to keep this program alive. Its success in helping people with limited job skills find employment is indisputable.

Lack of funds closes Sandy jobs program

Local funds fall short of amount needed to operate Sandy Job Club

The Sandy Job Club, a federally funded experimental program to provide jobs for young people, will close at the end of the month.

Grants were being sought for the non-profit organization, but local funding was needed to keep the doors open until January, when the grant money — if given — would have been available.

But two major fund-raisers generated only $340, which was not enough, said Darlene Lewis, co-director of the program.

"The people we've told it is ending are disappointed," Lewis said.

Lewis and Debbie Ricketts operated the Sandy Job Club after its director, Gary Knepper, accepted a job with Goodwill Industries of Portland in June.

Job Club board members had praised the work of Knepper and the others who operated the program. It was one of only three programs, out of 121, that was financed for a second year by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Job Club was founded two years ago. Sandy High School Principal Dennis Crow wrote the grant.

The goal of the program was to find employment for high school dropouts or others with minimal job skills. The Sandy Community Action Center also recommended the Job Club to clients who were unemployed.

The Job Club, which is in the Frontier Building at 39136 Highway 26, raised $300 with a garage sale recently. More than 30 sponsors donated prizes to a "Poker Run" held in August, but a small turnout resulted in the group earning only $40.

Lewis said it was not unusual to have 100 people visit the office each month during the summer. In the past year and a half, the Job Club placed 700 people.

Lewis said attorney David Barber worked hard to get the group designated as a non-profit organization, and the Job Club was successful at getting sponsors for its fund-raiser, but otherwise "we just couldn't get the community support," she said.

The Job Club operated on a $22,000 annual budget. Of that amount, $15,000 went to pay Knepper and two part-time secretaries.

The Job Club's budget was reduced even further to try and keep the program alive.

Mark Mullins, a chiropractic physician who served on the Job Club board, called the group's budget "tremendously lean."